

STRATEGIC
WARNING STAFF
REVIEW GROUP
FILE

10 June 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy to the DCI for the
Intelligence Community

THROUGH : Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Role of the Strategic Warning Staff

REFERENCE : Memorandum, Organization and Function of
the Strategic Warning Staff, dtd 7 June
1976, from ADD/OSR

1. We believe that it would be premature to make any major shifts in the organization or functions of the Strategic Warning Staff, such as are outlined in the reference memorandum.

2. The SWS was established only a scant year and a half ago. It replaced a twenty-year-old strategic warning mechanism, the Watch Committee and its staff at the National Indications Center, which the community agreed had outlived its usefulness. The SWS was set up, after extensive community discussions, as a new mechanism which could do a better job in (a) analyzing the indicators that the USSR, China, or North Korea might be planning hostile military action, and (b) helping the community sound the necessary warning.

3. The SWS was designed to provide a better "second-look" at strategic warning than the old Watch Committee structure did. It was designed to supplement the work done by current intelligence units in the community in ringing the warning bell. But it was based on the principle that there must be a place where the sole focus is looking closely at the warning indicators, without being bogged down by any requirements to produce current intelligence on many related topics.

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Approved For Release 2004/05/13 : CIA-RDP91M00696R000200030005-7

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4. The SWS is in a unique position to do its job. It receives and reviews more intelligence on strategic warning than any other office in the contributing agencies. Its location permits access to related military operational plans of the US and its allies--moves which might be provoking hostile enemy action. It receives highly sensitive reporting from its contributor agencies. It reviews indicators and it produces timely and provocative think-pieces on warning in its monthly.

5. There are several specific points that we would take issue with in the text of the reference memorandum.

a. With regard to Para 1: The SWS is just as well equipped to give strategic warning as it is to study warning indicators. It is a focal point to which all material pertinent to warning flows. It is in constant touch with all the relevant people in the community who work on the warning problem. It can task the various field commands in a matter of seconds. It can respond rapidly.

b. Para 2: Of course, strategic warning is a function of the whole community.. Nobody ever said it was not. It is the function of the SWS to continually remind and prod the community on this point. The SWS has six not twelve analysts. It does receive all the available intelligence reporting needed to give warning.

c. Para 3: The problem has indeed been one of failure--for example, Korea twice (the reason for the Watch Committee in the first place) and Cuba once. Further, the Watch Committee's least common denominator approach to the Czechoslovakian crisis was one of the reasons for the new machinery.

d. Para 4: Funding through the DCI might encourage State, Navy, and Army participation. Navy support is sorely needed.

e. Para 5: The SWS can not reasonably be expected to get by with fewer analysts. If it had the 10 called for by its table of organization it could do more of what is desired in para 5, although it is already doing some.

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f. Para 6: The Special Assistant for Strategic Warning (currently General Faurer) reports directly to the DCI, not his subordinate the Director, Strategic Warning. The present arrangement has worked well with the latter maintaining a close relationship with the NIO mechanism as well as with other production shops in the community.

g. Para 7: This memorandum in our judgment is not a CIA position and should not be billed as one. We expect that it will run into rough sledding in Review Group meetings from DIA, State, NSA and the services. In each of these agencies there is strong sentiment to increase the responsibilities and focus of the SWS--if anything to have it enlarged to review indications of any sort of military or critical developments throughout the world.

6. We believe therefore that any shifts now in the role or organization of the SWS would be premature. We recommend that the staff be given further time to play its present role. Rather than trimming the SWS back, we recommend that renewed efforts be made to flesh it out to its full strength, so that all the NFIB agencies are giving it the support it deserves.

[Redacted Signature]

former Director
Strategic Warning Staff

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Alternate CIA Member
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William K. Parmenter
Director of Current Intelligence

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Att: reference